

REMARKS

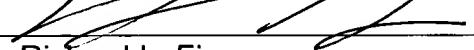
Claims 1, 2 and 15 have been amended. claims 1-15 and 17 remain in the application. Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Byrnes et al., and claims 4-15 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) where Byrnes et al. is used as the primary reference.

Since Byrnes et al. fails to disclose a meniscus at annular axial end faces of each viscoelastic sleeve as required by amended claims 1 and 15, all remaining claims distinguish over the art of record and are believed to be allowable. A notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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